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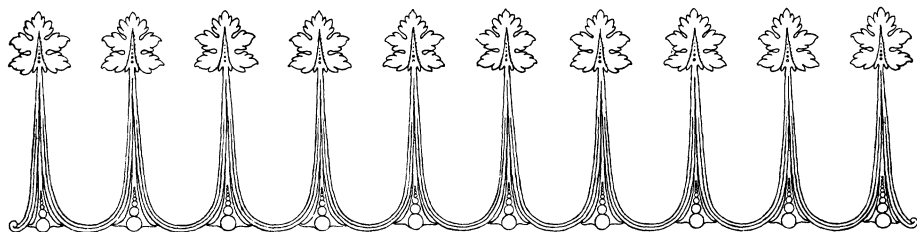
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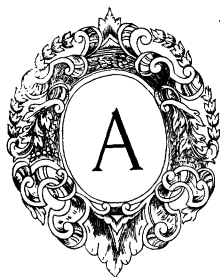
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## THE CLEARWATER COLLECTION OF COLONIAL SILVER



AMERICAN ART—its expression by our painters, sculptors, and craftsmen and the recognition of them by our people—was until recent years handicapped by the belief that our art was of recent growth and

lacked the weight of history, tradition, and inheritance, which in the minds of many seemed necessary for its widespread recognition. This erroneous belief is fast becoming dissipated, largely owing to the development of collections of American decorative art by the Metropolitan, Boston, and Providence museums. Their examples are being followed by the managements of other museums, notably the Brooklyn Institute and some of our large western museums. By these collections they are demonstrating that artistic sentiment has long existed here and played an important part in the early social life of our people.

Colonial silver of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in its perfection of form, texture, and craftsmanship may be studied in the Clearwater Collection, now located in Gallery 22 on the second floor. All the pieces in this collection—the result of years of patient gathering by Judge A. T. Clearwater—were made in America, and with few exceptions are the work of native-born Americans who had learned their trade in this country.

No student of American art and the development of artistic taste in this country can fail to recognize the work and influence

of our early silversmiths, their artistic conception and superb craftsmanship. Their handicraft is the earliest expression we have of our forefathers' appreciation of the beautiful, an appreciation which became widespread as the country prospered and furnished a steadily increasing patronage, which encouraged a succession of craftsmen, whose works assisted to beautify our American homes and today bear silent witness to the artistic tastes and desires of many whose descendants now people our great republic.

Half a century before the time when the first portrait painter ventured to Boston (1701)—and was permitted to enter only after giving bond "to Save the town Harmless"—silversmiths prospered there, and one hundred years before Copley first gave us his portraiture of our colonial aristocracy, many of the communion tables of our churches were supplied with silver vessels of local manufacture, whose charm and workmanship seem impossible of reproduction today.

The methods of these early American silversmiths were far removed from those of the craftsmen of the twentieth century: often their work was done in their homes instead of in shops with glittering show-cases. They received from our ancestors coin which had been brought in from the West Indies in payment for the products of fisheries, forest, and farms; this after being weighed and receipted for, was melted into ingots, hammered into sheets, welded into various forms,<sup>1</sup> and returned to the original owner—upon payment of

<sup>1</sup>The equipment of a well-established seventeenth-century English silversmith and the processes of manufacture are well illustrated in the reproduction of an engraving which served as a frontispiece for *A new Touchstone For Gold and Silver Wares*, published in London in 1679.

charges for fashioning—in the form of vessels for use on the dining table, where they shimmered and shone in sun- and candle- and fire-light and thereby furnished the first and only joyous note to the none too cozy atmosphere of our early ancestral homes.



CUP BY  
UNKNOWN MAKER

No art exhibition held in this city so instantly influenced and directed an understanding of our early artistic accomplishments as the Hudson-Fulton Exhibition held at the Museum in 1909. It is not too much to say that it brought prominently into the regular channels of commerce



PLATE BY  
SAMUEL MINOTT (1732-1803)

colonial and Georgian art by making possible a widespread appreciation of it. Queen Anne, Chippendale, Hepplewhite, and Sheraton pieces, which had hitherto lurked in the windows of the antique shops of the side streets, immediately appeared (and have since remained) in the show windows

of our palatial shops on the Avenue. Silver plate of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century forms has since decorated the show-cases of our great silver shops. All interested in American craftsmanship have noted the influence of this exhibition upon our craftsmen who work in metal.

That same rare inspiration and opportunity for careful scrutiny and study, hitherto given to our designers and decorators by the Departments of Decorative Arts of the Museum and Cooper Union, can now through the Clearwater Collection be supplied to those who work in silver.

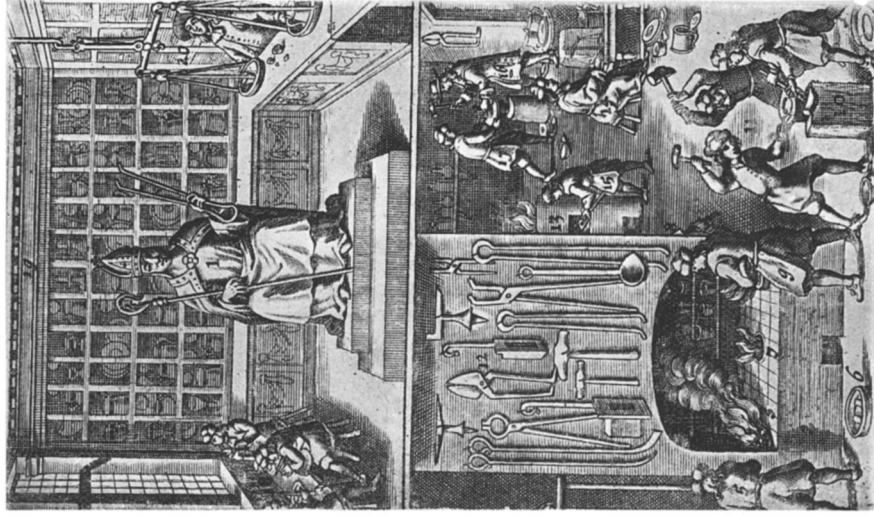
The collection is of the period when ancient geometrical shapes held sway among craftsmen; when purity of form, sense of proportion, and perfection of line were preferred to elaborateness of design; when dignity and solidity were considered superior to bulk; and when the plain, polished surface of the beautiful white metal was allowed to take its color note from its surroundings rather than to serve as a medium for the display of skill by craftsmen. Judge Clearwater's loan also includes a few pieces of our nineteenth-century plate, which well illustrate the decadence of the art of the silversmith during that atrocious period of craftsmanship known as the Victorian Era.

The collection, which has been constantly added to, has just been rearranged, and now for the first time it is easy for students to study the chronological development of our early styles and fashions. The work of each maker has been grouped, thereby making it possible in many cases to identify the personal touches in manufacture so peculiar to our early craftsmen. The descriptive labels, which accompany each piece, bear facsimile drawings of the maker's mark, a feature not found in previous exhibitions of old plate.

Pen and camera are inadequate to its proper description. The subtleties of texture and light and shade baffle reproduction; every piece of hollow ware has its own individuality of size, form, texture, and color. The exactness and precision of the stock pattern of today fortunately are lacking. Personality predominates. All

## The Intent of the Frontispiece.

- 1 *St. Dunstan, the Patron of the Goldsmiths Company.*
- 2 *The Refining Furnace.*
- 3 *The Test with Silver refining on it.*
- 4 *The Fining Bellows.*
- 5 *The Man blowing or working them.*
- 6 *The Test Mould.*
- 7 *A Wind-hole to melt Silver in without Bellows.*
- 8 *A pair of Organ Bellows.*
- 9 *A Man melting or Boiling, or heating Silver at them.*
- 10 *A Block, with a large Anvil placed thereon.*
- 11 *Three Men Forging Plate.*
- 12 *The Fining and other Goldsmiths Tools.*
- 13 *The Assay Furnace.*
- 14 *The Assay-Master making Assays.*
- 15 *His Man putting the Assays into the Fire.*
- 16 *The Warden marking the Plate on the Anvil.*
- 17 *His Officer holding the Plate for the Marks.*
- 18 *Three Goldsmiths, small-workers, at work.*
- 19 *A Goldsmiths Shop furnished with Plate.*
- 20 *A Goldsmith weighing Plate.*



the pieces are rare and many are unique; while in general lines they follow the fashion and forms of old England, certain of them show charming individuality of shape



TEAPOT BY  
JOHN CONEY (1655-1722)

and decorative motive not found in the plate made in Europe.

The collection contains over one hundred and forty beautiful pieces of hollow



CHOCOLATE POT BY  
EDWARD WINSLOW (1669-1753)

ware. Its completeness enables an exhaustive study of the chronological development of the various forms of beakers, tankards, porringers, mugs, and teapots, and various other articles used upon the

table. Spoons, sugar tongs, etc., are to be found in great abundance. In fact, an exhaustive catalogue of the collection would form a textbook of American silver and its makers.

The collection is especially rich in the work of the silversmiths who lived in Boston during the later part of the seventeenth and the early years of the eighteenth century. These have a greatly added interest in that they are the work of men, all of whom took a prominent part in the development of New England—its resources and democracy.

The wondrous life stories of many of the makers of these pieces of American silver have already been told in the lengthy historical introductions of the catalogues of loan exhibitions held in the Boston (1906) and Metropolitan Museums (1911). Enough has already been written to give us an insight into the histories, personalities, and environment of these early colonial craftsmen and to make these examples of their handiwork very personal and almost human. It is not the purpose of this article of appreciation of the results of Judge Clearwater's collecting to retell these tales.

Probably to many the most fascinating piece in the collection is a teapot of wonderful texture and color made by John Coney (1655-1722) of Boston, who it will be remembered engraved the plates for the first paper money used in America. The coat of arms it bears testifies to this early American engraver's skill with his engraving tools. It is the earliest American teapot of which we know. A tankard and a porringer by the same maker are noteworthy pieces.

Judge Clearwater has been extraordinarily fortunate in securing four remarkable pieces bearing the mark of Edward Winslow (1669-1753), also of Boston, whose work entitles him to be recorded as the greatest of our colonial silversmiths. He was an American, the grandson of the John Winslow who came over in the Fortune in 1623, and on his mother's side was a direct descendant of Anne Hutchinson—that goodly dame whose life figured so largely in early New England and New



BRAZIER BY JOHN BURT (1691-1745)



MUG  
BY KAISER GRIESEL  
(LATE XVII CENTURY)



BEAKER  
BY UNIDENTIFIED MAKER  
(EARLY XVIII CENTURY)

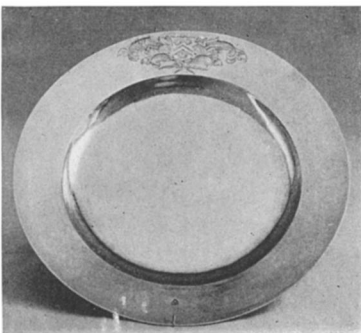


PLATE BY  
EDWARD WINSLOW (1669-1753)



MUG BY  
JOHN DIXWELL (1680-1725)

York history. Winslow, in common with almost all of our early silversmiths, was very prominent in the civic life of the com-



BEAKER, NEW YORK  
XVII CENTURY

munity. He served successively as constable, tithing-man, surveyor, overseer of the poor, selectman, and sheriff of Suffolk County (1728-43); from this office he was



COFFEE POT BY  
PYGAN ADAMS (1712-1776)

appointed Judge of the Inferior Court of Common Pleas. Defense in those days was not the neglected problem it is today. In 1702 he was second lieutenant in the artillery company and in 1714 its captain;

he was major of the Boston regiment in 1729 and its colonel in 1733. The elaborately wrought chocolate pot and beautifully fashioned plate illustrated herewith, and two tankards demonstrate the very high order of his craftsmanship.

William Cowell (1682-1736) is represented by a porringer. It is the same Cowell thus referred to by Samuel Sewall under date of June 21, 1707: "Billy Cowell's shop is entered by the chimney and a considerable quantity of plate was stolen."

John Dixwell (1680-1725), the son of the "regicide," Col. John Dixwell, who found an asylum in America and lived in retirement in New Haven, is another of these early eighteenth-century silversmiths whose work may be viewed in the collection. John Burt (1691-1745) was the maker of the splendid brazier illustrated on page 7. Of equal interest is the work of his son Benjamin Burt (1729-1804).

The work of the Reveres, father and son, is also well represented. The father, a Huguenot boy, served his apprenticeship under Coney; the son, the patriot and messenger of prerevolutionary days, was only nineteen years old when his father died and left him to carry on the trade which he had so successfully developed. The exquisite teapot of the period of 1790, illustrated on page 9, has aesthetic qualities which demonstrate Revere's artistic excellence.

Salem, Providence, Newport, and Philadelphia have contributed to this splendid collection. New York is adequately represented. A splendid coffee pot of the middle of the eighteenth century, fashioned by Pygan Adams of New London, indicates that superb craftsmanship flourished outside of the confines of our largest cities.

Undoubtedly, the most beautiful piece of New York silver in the collection is a beaker made by some late seventeenth-century Knickerbocker silversmith. Its makership cannot be identified, however, owing to the partial obliteration of the maker's mark. It is a form greatly in vogue among our early New York silversmiths, whose work as a rule followed closely the conventional forms and decorations of the Dutch silversmiths. This same Dutch influence is found in many ex-

BULLETIN OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

amples of English plate of the sixteenth century; in form and ornament, the beaker closely resembles a London beaker bearing the date-letter of the year 1599.

To all Americans who rejoice in the

charm which no foreign plate can possibly possess; for it represents the work and personalities of men who gave to the country the best they possessed in the form of service to church and state and thereby



TEAPOT BY PAUL REVERE (1735-1818)

stories of our country's past—its ideals and its struggles to maintain them—and to all jealously apprehensive of our country's future—endangered by isms and political nostrums—this ancient silver of Judge Clearwater must have an added

assisted in the gradual moulding and welding together of the various integral units of colonial life into the great republic of which we are so proud and whose traditions we hold so dear.

R. T. H. HALSEY.

